

# The TRAIL of the BARBARIANS

being

"L'Outrage des Barbares"

by

PIERRE LOTI

*Translated by*

FORD MADOX HUEFFER



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from a drawing by Maffeiad Bone.

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON

FOURTH AVENUE AND 30TH STREET, NEW YORK

BOMBAY, CALCUTTA, AND MADRAS

1917

PRICE THREEPENCE NET



THE TRAIL OF THE  
BARBARIANS

THE TRAIL OF THE  
SMOKE

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## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

**I**T has been my ambition, for more years than I can remember, to devote the closing stage of my life to rendering into English some masterpiece of a French stylist. Well, here is the rendering of the masterpiece of a French stylist; and Fate wills it that it has been performed between parades, orderly rooms, *strafes*, and the rest of the preoccupations that re-fit us for France . . . so it is not a good rendering. You need from 11.45 pip emma of 8/8/17 to 11.57 pip emma of 9/8/17 for the rendering of almost any French sentence! . . .

But, in spite of lack of leisure, I will quarrel with the Master as to his employment of one word: the word "irreparable." I have seen ruined France—such of it as is ruined—and have seen on the Somme the mole-work that is demanded of the foot-slogger, and, probably because the mole can see what is going on below ground better than he who passes beneath the rose and grey skies of a French spring, I am more sure than Mr. Loti that the grass is already moving that shall cover the graveyards and the rusty heaps of recovered provinces.

It is not only that the horizon-blue soldiers—and the mud-coloured ones!—are billeted amongst the ruins: it is that the inhabitants—all those upholders of the matchless "little industries" of France—are

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astonishingly hidden amongst the gaping rafters and the brick heaps, and the husbandmen are astonishingly and tenaciously hidden in the fields. *Agricolam expellas furca : tamen usque recurret !* I have bought a melon in the ruins of Mametz. . . .

And last year, whilst we were eating bully beef and biscuits in a field that we had recovered only three days before from the Germans, a dour, tall man in corduroys, carrying a brass-bound whip, approached us and peremptorily desired to know who was going to pay him for the damage that we were doing to his corn-field ! The 4.2's were ploughing it for him at that moment. . . .

Well, to-day the tall wheat rises over that field behind Bécourt Wood ; for in France nothing is irreparable, since France<sup>1917</sup> possesses the secret of eternal life.

FORD MADOX HUEFFER,

Lieut. 3rd/attd. 9th Battalion,

The Welch Regiment.

9th August 1917.



## DEDICATION

### TO FRENCH SCHOOL-CHILDREN AT THEIR PRIZE DISTRIBUTIONS

**I** HAVE been asked to speak to the little ones of France: to speak to them of their country. And, all of a sudden, I find myself grown timid at the idea of so noble a responsibility. For, in days past, I was a wanderer whose chief preoccupation was to vibrate passionately under the lights and charms of the skies the world over. . . . And then, in the evening of my life, I have come to see that no land is so adorable as our French country, and that we must sacrifice to the uttermost—our goods, our lives, and those of our sons, and those of our brothers—so that we may defend her; and this not only because of ourselves, who would die did she die, but because she is a light, whose obscuration would darken the world. . . .

Let me begin by taking up the challenge of a mournful phrase which you may have heard already; for it appears that this point of view has, in certain soils, the gift of propagation. Alas, I have heard people say: "We are waging this war for the rich!" . . . These poor blinded people do not speak from the trenches, but from the rear, where sinister and evil spirits have leisure to work upon the hearts of men. What can be the origin of this small cluster of snakes, whose lies are absurd and smell of the Hun? And what a shameless blasphemy it is! Does not all

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the evidence go to show that, all alike, we are fighting against the most abominable aggression of modern times—an aggression whose horror surpasses any that has been ventured on by barbaric tyrants of past days? The “rich,” as they are called, are serving in the ranks along with the poorest of men ; the “rich,” on the other hand, are just those who would have had the least to suffer from the rapacity and tyranny of the Ogre of Berlin ; the poor would have been utterly sucked dry by the terrible German horse-leeches. . . .

Dear little children of France, take time to read this little book, although it may prove infinitely less attractive than the exciting volumes that will be distributed to you on your prize-days. Read it, for it is inspired not by hatred, but by truth and justice. May those amongst you who have had the good fortune to be born outside our invaded provinces, may those amongst you who have been preserved from witnessing those horrible devastations, find here the exact account of them just as I wrote it on the spot, along with the Army, making a great effort to be exact. . . .

Dear little children of France, when the fortunes of war shall have changed, I do not ask that you shall avenge yourselves on the lands that lie beyond the Rhine ; or that, there, you shall reproduce what I have shown that they have done here. No ; leave such things to the officers and soldiers of the German Emperor ; and, besides, you are not capable of barbarities.

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But, *never forget!* These men of Germany, I give you my word, are not such as you should fraternise with. Later they will seek to return and to insinuate themselves deviously beside our hearths; then, shut your doors close; keep them out, as you would keep out wolves and vampires, Let it be your aim that our beloved country, learning wisdom at last from the greatness of its misfortune, may remain French alone and more than ever French.

PIERRE LOTI.

*July 1917.*



## THEIR SUPERIORITY

"We have nothing for which to make excuses, we are morally and intellectually superior to all the world, we are without equals. This time we will clean the slate."—*Lasson, German Professor.*

May 1917.

THROUGHOUT whole leagues, during whole hours, to pass through landscapes of desolation, the mere conception of which before these days would have been impossible to the imagination of a Frenchman, to tell oneself that that is all that remains to us of fair provinces, upon which *their* master had let them loose! . . .

How they must have worked, the gorillas! They must have worked with an indefatigable fury and a stupefying genius of evil-doing before they could have brought about such appalling devastations, which, the further one goes, stretch before one always, further and further. It is a whole great district of our country which has ceased to exist. It is like trying to escape from a nightmare; every minute, at every turning in the road, you say to yourself or you hope: "This must come to an end." But, no, it never ceases; ruins succeed to ruins; towns, bridges crossing rivers, villages, humble and solitary farms—everything is sacked, smashed, crumbled into dust. The gorillas found time to spare nothing. . . .

If we had wished to anticipate a little of all this, it would have been enough to sound the Germanic soul, or only to glance at the history



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of Germany, before this war, which has revealed her so irrefutably. Many simple souls amongst us understood from the words, "German industry," the thousands of factories, the flood of pinchbeck and imitations that for some decades past has poured itself out across the world.

But there was an industry still more German, still more fundamentally national—that of espionage, rapine, violation, and murder. If we read the works of their thinkers and of their great men, upon every page we find the apologia of that particular industry. If we delve into their annals we find that by this particular industry, above all, they have lived.

Some months before the present invasion, which was so patiently and so diabolically prepared, a certain von Bernhardi set himself the task, on the instigation of the German Emperor, of pleading extenuating circumstances for the crimes that were premeditated by his master. "It is actually more humane," he dared to write, "to make war frightfully, so that it may the sooner finish." And to think that men have been found amongst us who could take that seriously, and could do this pantaloon the honour of discussion!

A little later the Ogre of Berlin, believing that the time had come, threw open at last the cage doors of his wild beasts, and upon noble Belgium, as upon our dear France, there poured forth this hue and cry of beasts of prey. Nevertheless—oh, wonder!—the Neutral States made no move, and—wonder greater still—some were even to be found who, for



“ One of the strangenesses of these deserts which have been created in the open countries of France is the profusion of strands of barbed wire which serpentine across the whole landscape ” (p. 5).



“ They are the gasping ruins of an unfortified town . . . ” (p. 7).



“ Not one house, small or large, but has been gutted from top to bottom ; they display, these houses, their interiors, as if their entrails had been three parts scattered to the winds ” (p. 7).

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the expenditure of a little money or a few lies became the friends of Germany.

But it is only to-day, in the course of what they style their brilliant retreat, that horror reaches truly to its height ; it is only to-day that we see the true unmasking of a Germany that unveils to the world its ghoul's face. For, since the days of Attila, Europe had lost the idea of such ferocities—of civil populations led away to slavery, of destruction, of rapine, of butchery—even of the violation of the tombs of our soldiers, which was officially and meticulously organised by their leaders.

That they can never deny, since they have narrated it all in their own papers ; since they have complacently glorified all the trouble that it must have cost their troops, acting upon orders, whenever they evacuated our already martyrised towns, so that they should not leave behind for us anything more than a desert. And they have added naively that certain of their soldiers, who must have been simple souls, and somewhat accessible to pity, recoiled from that ignoble duty, so that the “noble” exhortations of their superiors had to be brought to compel them to execute their tasks.

\* \* \*

“ Must it be that our civilisation shall raise up her temples upon the dead piled mountains high, by the side of oceans of tears and to the sound of the death-rattle in the throats of the dying ? . . . Yes.”

*Field-Marshal von Haeseler.*

Now that the spring—inscrutable or ironic—has brought back here its cloak of verdure and the song

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of birds, nothing smiles amongst our new-made ruins, which seem as if they were still bleeding. On the contrary, the abomination of the German handiwork only appears more revolting because of the spring. And I believe that these dead landscapes, from which we have just driven out the barbarians, but to which the country-people have not yet returned, and in which the distant grumbling of the cannon alone mixes with the small ecstatic trillings of the nightingale—I think that these dead landscapes are more lugubrious than they were in winter.

A May sky, tranquil and tender, coloured rose-grey, has been stretched like a uniform veil above my long day's journey. It makes the green of the new leafage and of the interminable carpets of grass appear more vivid.

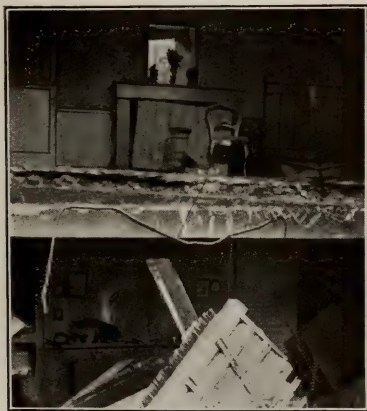
And it is too tufted, this grass, which hides up rags and sinister debris, and seems to cover up, more than of right it should, this soil of the plains—this earth, which has been deeply turned over in ditches and in trenches, which is sown with fascines and great fragments of ironwork, with here and there shell-holes and monstrous craters.

From time to time you will see a village—and it has no longer the shape of a village; the cottages will have fallen down around the fallen church, so that it will resemble a house of cards when the table has been shaken. There are also woods—and these will display to you only tortured and riven trunks upon which rare branches seek still to hang out a





"Then there come the few old women—always the old women who are found in ruined towns, left behind by the Germans . . . like things discarded as useless . . ." (p. 8).



" . . . the little, humble households. They have been got together at the cost of years of toil and economy ; they have been destroyed in a minute . . ." (p. 9).



“ And, when they return, those exiles who have not died in slavery may not expect to find in their homes anything of all the things that were dear to them ” (p. 9).



“ Nothing but this chaos is in store for them ” (p. 9).

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holiday finery of greenness, as was their habit in the quiet springs of former years. Of course, as you come nearer to the zone that the enemy still hold, horror becomes more manifest; but though the guns sound louder and louder, they cannot silence the song of the birds. One of the strangenesses of these deserts which have been created in the open countries of France is the profusion of strands of barbed wire which serpentine across the whole landscape; this ravel of entanglements, thirty or forty feet wide, bristling with arresting spikes, crossing each other, and interlacing for miles and miles, running out of sight through the too-luxuriant tufts of grass, bears witness to the tremendous industry of whole legions of human spiders. How many years will it take to remove all these entanglements, to level all this torn earth? We have to rebuild the towns and villages; but even without that, how many years will it take us to clear away so much old iron, the immense number of fragments of shells that have fallen like hail? . . . Those which have not burst will be a menace for many years to the tillers of the soil. . . .

I remember a meeting, amongst the silent ruins of a hamlet, where masses of wallflowers were like yellow gold upon the upright surfaces of the walls and the lilac burgeoned out in violet profusions, amongst vague enclosures that had formerly been little closes. Two very old women still lived there—very old women, with white hair, their cheeks seamed, their eyes haggard; they seemed to have

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been stupefied. Since they were so old that they were worthless, the Germans had left them behind. And who will say what has become of their sons and daughters? Who shall say what tortures, of waiting, of moral anguish, of physical terror, they have endured, whilst they shivered at the bottom of their cellars . . . for two or three winters, whilst they waited for the French to come back? I first saw them beside a well—a well which for generations had furnished their family with clear water. They had just drawn a bucketful painfully, with a frayed cord, and they were smelling it distrustfully. "It still smells," one said; and the other: "Yes, yes, it smells. Throw it away quickly."

These little trivial phrases, uttered with a sort of mournful lassitude, were as plaintive to hear as any complaints that you could make up. . . . We know that when they went away the Germans had paid the place the delicate attention—the *Delikatesse*—of poisoning all the water. In the pockets of their prisoners—or of their dead, as far as that goes—there have been found the precise orders of their officers: "Private So-and-So, with his squad, will take charge of the wells. He will throw into them, in sufficient quantity, poison, creosote—or refuse, in default of these."

\*                      \*

\*

And now, as our journey proceeds, down there, far away, thousands of pyramidal shapes begin to



AVRICOURT (SOMME).—THE CHÂTEAU.

“ After being pillaged, the houses, châteaux, and farms were either blown up, burnt to the ground, or demolished with pickaxes.” (*Journal Officiel*, p. 3059, col. ii.)



MARGNY-AUX-CERISES (OISE).—THE BATTERING-RAM.

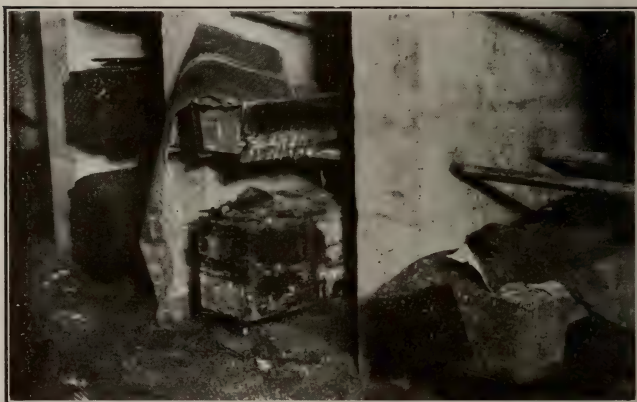
“ At Margny-aux-Cerises their destruction was in part carried out by means of a powerful battering-ram.” (*Journal Officiel*, p. 3059, col. iii.)





ONE AMONG OUR THOUSAND RUINED CHURCHES.

"They knew exactly how much explosive was needed for the carrying out of their infamous work. Nothing now remains of the Church of St. Martin but a few bare walls." (*Journal Officiel*, p. 3059, col. iii.)



DESECRATED COFFINS.

"One asks oneself with amazement how it is possible for the army of a nation calling itself civilised to commit such deeds; but more astounding still is the discovery that its soldiers have even desecrated tombs." (*Ibid.*, col. ii.)

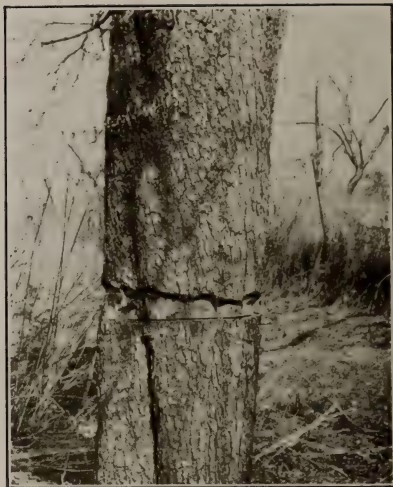


HOW THEY LEET OUR AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY.



RUINED AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY.

“ Here and there, a certain number of these machines had been piled up in a heap and set on fire. The iron wheels had been buckled by the heat, the cog-wheels and gearing smashed, and the wooden parts consumed by the flames.”  
*(Journal Officiel, p. 3060, col. i.)*



MUTILATED TREE.



BLOSSOMING FOR

*"Nearly everywhere fruit trees in fields and gardens  
their bark in order to kill them."*



DEVASTATED APPLE ORCHARD.



THE LAST TIME.



MUTILATED TREE.

*have been cut down or deeply notched or stripped of*  
*(Journal Officiel, p. 3060, col. i.)*



THE RUIN IN OUR ORCHARDS.





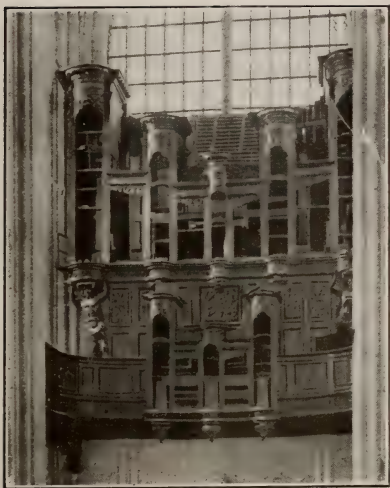
A SUGAR-FACTORY IN THE AISNE DEPARTMENT.



A SUGAR-FACTORY IN THE SOMME DEPARTMENT.

"The Germans did their utmost to destroy entirely the factories and agricultural property. At Roye . . . they set fire to the sugar-factories and systematically ruined all industrial plant." (*Journal Officiel*, p. 3059, col. iii.)





NOYON (OISE).—THE CATHEDRAL.

"The German Command had all the bells and organ-pipes removed from the cathedral at Noyon." (*Journal Officiel*, p. 3059, col. i.)



NOYON (OISE).—PRIVATE SAFES AT THE BRIÈRE BANK,  
OPENED BY MEANS OF A BLOWPIPE.

"As M. Brière expressed surprise that even his business documents were being removed, the officer to whom he spoke, and who described himself as the delegate of the Berlin Treasury, simply replied: 'I have had orders to empty the safes, and that is what I am doing.' " (*Ibid.*)

## COMMANDANTURE DE NOYON

### Avis au public.

Il est rappelé à la population que, par **ordre supérieur**, tous les habitants du sexe masculin âgés de **12 ans** au moins, doivent saluer poliment, en se découvrant, tous les officiers de l'armée allemande, ainsi que les fonctionnaires ayant rang d'officier.

M. le Commandant de Place a constaté que, malgré ces prescriptions beaucoup d'hommes et principalement des jeunes gens, ne **saluent pas** ou ne le font que **d'une manière inconvenante**.

En conséquence, pour lui éviter tout ennui, la population est invitée à se conformer strictement aux ordres rappelés ci-dessus.

Noyon, le 12 mai 1916.

Le Commandant de place.

### THE ORDER OF THE GERMAN COMMANDANT.

strictly to the orders above referred to.—Noyon, May 12, 1916.—THE COMMANDANT.

*Notice to the Public.*—Riez Gustave, rue St. Pierre 1, and Bertrand Gustave, rue d'Applaincourt 6, have been condemned to three days' imprisonment for having failed to salute German officers by uncovering their heads.—Noyon, July 28, 1915.—THE COMMANDANT.

NOYON COMMAND.—*Notice to the Public.*—The people are reminded that by superior orders all male inhabitants of the age of twelve and upwards must salute politely, by uncovering their heads, all officers of the German army as well as officials having the rank of officer. The Commandant has observed that, notwithstanding this regulation, many men, and particularly the younger ones, do not salute or do so in an improper manner. In view of this, and in order to spare themselves any unpleasantness, the public is advised to conform

### Avis au public.

Riez Gustave, rue St. Pierre No 1 et Bertrand Gustave, rue d'Applaincourt No 6 ont été punis de trois jours de prison, parce-*qu'* ils n'ont pas salué les officiers allemands en se découvrant.

Noyon, le 28 juillet 1915.

Le commandant de la place.

### THE PUNISHMENT.

"At every moment our unfortunate fellow-citizens were obliged to submit to fresh inroads on their rights and personal dignity. . . . They were ordered, for instance, to salute the officers, hat in hand . . . the whole process being backed up by imprisonment and fines for the slightest breach of endless regulations which were put forward as a pretext." (*Journal Officiel*, p. 3058, col. iii.)

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show ; reddish and irregular, they cover a vast space. . . .

They are the gasping ruins of an unfortified town—one of the great and fair cities of France. Two months ago it still existed. But the labours of the anthropoid civilisers have there indeed been “without equal.” . . . “Private So-and-So, with the assistance of his squad,” so run the irrefutable service orders found in the German pockets, “will carry the incendiary materials into such-and-such houses. . . . This fatigue party will place the explosives detailed in the margin in such-and-such cellars.” And the meticulous carrying out of these orders has been marvellous in its effects.

Your first entry into the town will cause in you a poignant and unforgettable impression of anguish, of revolt, of stupour. You will have the impulse to cry out, to blaspheme. What a masterpiece it all is—of mad destruction ! Assuredly, nowhere, nor in any epoch of the world’s history, is there a record of horror comparable to this. And then, . . . it was done all at once ; and it was done only yesterday, as it were—an immense wound in still palpitating flesh.

In this great city, street succeeds street and open place to place ; and the destruction is everywhere alike. Not one house, small or large, but has been gutted from top to bottom ; they display, these houses, their interiors, as if their entrails had been three parts scattered to the winds. You would say they had all been decapitated and disembowelled.

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The higher and the more luxurious they are, the more improbable do they appear ; the flat surfaces of their ruined walls, which from a distance looked like capricious pyramids, remain in places upright up to the slopes of the roofs, and the wallpapers, and sometimes even the pictures and mirrors, are still bright. In mid-air you will see sofas and arm-chairs still new ; beds, which slope or hang over the edges of destroyed floors, held up by one leg ; and clothes of all sorts that have been vomited forth by wardrobes. Gilt shop-signs dance a death saraband over the heaps of brickdust that represent homes. Penthouses and roofs, in places, have not altogether fallen, and the tottering walls seem to have hats on one side, like chasseurs ; a gust of wind or a transport wagon are enough to cause whole landslides.

Nevertheless, there is a population for these long streets, for this landscape of hell—a population though the shells have never ceased falling. In the first place, there are the horizon-blue detachments of our soldiers ; then there come the few old women—always the old women who are found in ruined towns, left behind by the Germans—old middle-class women or the aged poor, like things discarded as useless, haggard, with wandering expressions, and the looks of saints or of martyrs. And our dear blue soldiers who entered the town so very lately with such hurricane rage, with such a passion for vengeance, saunter about very calmly, prepared already to pardon. There are even some, escorting groups of prisoners, who talk to them almost like



“ Here we have our own good Territorials, with their kindly, honest faces, bending under the hot sunlight and labouring courageously ” (pp. 14-15).



“ In the zone that we are entering, the century-old trees which used to border the roads so bravely have been sawn through by the Huns a yard above the ground ” (p. 15).





"Strange forms in profile erect themselves against the horizon: . . . they are piston rods, wheels, boilers, protruding in all directions from heaps of masonry" (pp. 15-16).



"The whole town is just one immense and formless tumulus" (p. 17).

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comrades. . . . In this France of ours we are too good-natured. . . .

I think it is in the poorer quarters of this town that the emotion of pity is the strongest—amongst the little, humble households. They have been got together at the cost of years of toil and economy ; they have been destroyed in a minute because of an imbecile order from Berlin. . . . Oh, poor, poor peoples !

Amongst so many thousands of details certain ones arbitrarily remain in the mind. Thus, I remember, on the first storey of a certain house, above formless heaps of bricks, a little remembrance of a first communion which hangs still, unsullied, upon a nail in the wall, and seems to look at passers-by through the gaping opening in the front wall. In another place, in what remains of a room with blue wallpaper, a very little white lace dress still hangs from a peg, the sleeves falling forward as if the head were bowed—the little best dress of some workman's daughter who wore it on her Sunday walks. . . . And for ever and for ever you may go on walking and walking, returning on your tracks, changing your direction ; but you never change the character of your pilgrimage—the ferocity of destruction has missed nothing. And, when they return, those exiles who have not died in slavery may not expect to find in their homes anything of all the things that were dear to them. Nothing but this chaos is in store for them ; and it would be better to wish that they may never return—that

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they may never again see their homes—for it is all irreparable. Before we shall even be able to think of rebuilding we shall have to labour at levelling the ruins. . . .

Is it possible that so much human labour which stood for the achievements and aspirations of many centuries should have been stupidly blotted out in two days? For that was about the time it took; they had laid in such a store of explosives. And our Allies who had come to deliver the town—the Allies here, as on the outskirts of other towns from which we have driven the barbarians—were forced to look on at the nameless sacrilege, to see all the town flame to the heavens, to witness the crumbling away of the whole town when they were too far away to stay it. . . .

How miserable to have done all that . . . and how stupid! Besides being unspeakable, it is the mark on the scutcheon of that heavy Teutonic stupidity which even in the day of Frederick, mis-called the Great, amused Voltaire so much. For, when everything is said and done, of what good is it to anyone, and whom can it profit to have proclaimed, to have written down indelibly, for the edification of a whole world, such a record of incurable savagery—just to satisfy a mad lust for destruction in an Emperor?

“Without equals.” . . . Yes, Professor von Lasson; oh, yes, in truth, the Germans are without equals. Happily, it is true for humanity that their like does not exist. . . .



The Kaiser: " 'It is my will that, in fifty years, your passing through may be remembered with terror ' " (p. 19).

Holnon, le 24 juillet 1915.

Tous les ouvriers et les femmes et les enfants de 15 ans sont obligés de faire travaux très châtivés tous les jours, aussi dimanche de quatre heures le matin jusqu'à 8 heures le soir dans l'usine. Réduire d'une demi-heure au matin et d'une demi-heure après midi.

La contrainte sera punie à la manière suivante.

1. Les faibles ouvriers seront condamnés pendant la révolte en compagnie des ouvriers dans une cage sous inspection des experts allemands après la révolte. Les faibles seront emprisonnés 3 mois; le troisième jour la nourriture sera seulement du pain et de l'eau.

2. Les femmes faibles seront envoyées à Holnon pour travailler.

Après la révolte les femmes seront emprisonnées 6 mois.

3. Les enfants faibles seront punis de coups de bâton.

Le chef le Commandant réserve de punir les faibles ouvriers de 10 jours de prison si tous les jours.

Les ouvriers de la deuxième catégorie sont punis de 10 jours.



Glopp

et Commandant

THE FAMOUS GERMAN PROCLAMATION OF HOLNON.

(For translation see opposite page.)



## THE TRAIL OF THE BARBARIANS

And, my God, to think that there are still Neutrals! But that must be because they cannot believe, because they do not know, because they have not seen with their own eyes . . . all this. Ah, how I have longed to bring some of my Spanish friends here. Assuredly, then, the scales would fall from their eyes.

If I think more particularly of Spain, of chivalrous Spain, it is because I have loved her so dearly during the quarter of a century that I have lived near her frontiers. . . . We shall do without her help, and, when it is all finished, it is not I that shall grudge her her share of the deliverance that we shall bring to

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Holnon, July 20, 1915.

All workmen, and women and children of 15 years and upwards, must work in the fields daily, Sundays included, from 4 a.m. till 8 p.m. (French time). A break is allowed of half an hour in the morning, one hour at midday, and half an hour in the afternoon.

Any breach of these regulations will be punished as follows:—

(1) Men refusing to work will *during* the harvest be formed into labour companies and detained in barracks under the supervision of German corporals.

*After* the harvest those refusing to work will be sent to prison for six months; on the third day the rations will be simply bread and water.

(2) Women unwilling to work will be exiled to Holnon to labour.

*After* the harvest these women will be imprisoned for six months.

(3) Children refusing to work will be flogged.

The Commandant will, further, at his discretion order the punishment of refractory workmen with a flogging of 20 strokes daily.

The workmen of the parish of Veudelles are now undergoing severe punishment.

[Signature of the Commandant.]

*To be posted in Public.*

## THE TRAIL OF THE BARBARIANS

Europe. But I have so wished to see her at our side, united in suffering . . . and in honour.

\* \* \*

For a long while I have been going through this agonising town with its suburbs as infernally ravaged as its quasi-opulent centre ; and then we come to a region where there awaits us, as a final horror—the tragedy of the trees.

“Private So-and-So, with his fatigue party,” so runs their unspeakable order, “will attend to the sawing through of fruit trees.” And methodically, as in everything else, these people set to work. In a zone six or seven miles wide great pear trees and apple trees a hundred years old, the chief riches of the peasants, were aligned along the borders of the roads or in the orchards ; and the gorillas (not neglecting to destroy the smallest hamlet) found time to saw them all through a yard above the earth. As soon as the branches of one tottered and fell over they passed on to the next, without losing precious minutes, in their haste to finish them all. And so some of these beautiful pyramids of trees, lying along the earth, are still attached to their trunks by a few strands of bark which have conveyed to them the precious sap, so that they have flourished for one last spring-time. You would say they were enormous white or pink bouquets laid upon the earth. But the sap will soon cease to flow, the flowers will fade and yield no fruits ; and they are touching in their melancholy, all these poor, last flowerings of venerable trees that are about to die. . . .

# A TOWN THAT HAS BEEN "TREATED" BY THEM

"Our gracious Kaiser."  
*Marshal Hindenburg.*

20th June 1917.

AFTER a radiant spring, a southern summer has descended over all the North of France, and the bright light floods down upon the desolation of the freed provinces. The cold of a winter whose frosts endured late into the year had kept back the sap which stored itself in great volume, and this, being suddenly released, conveyed to the trees, to the grasses, and to the flowers an unaccustomed luxuriance. Along the roads that my car has covered to-day for many hours, the woods that the shells have not too entirely destroyed, the open country which was formerly meadowland and has now become covered as if with rank pampas-grass, display an exuberance of greenery that is almost that of paradise. The ruins are garlanded with valerian and roses. And the birds make concerts deliciously amongst the depths of the June leafage.

Upon the road I have met squads of German prisoners listlessly filling in the holes made by *minenwerfers*. Each of them has a great number painted on his back; they wear slacks of cabbage-green and waistcoats with ridiculous flaps. Some are old and round-shouldered, wearing spectacles and hideous beards of what looks like discoloured

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rope yarn. Others are young—very young and slouching boys, whose huge and murderous hands have outgrown their short cuffs. They must have grown up since the declaration of war; several of them are the sons of middle-class families, and, in order to perform the duties of road-menders, they have retained their glasses and their students' caps. They have nearly all the aggressive bearing which is characteristic of their "supreme race." I felt constrained to return their military salutes, in spite of my repulsion; but it cost me a painful effort.

After the region of plains that had been put out of cultivation for three years, I came to one of magnificent wheatlands, lit up by cornflowers and scarlet poppies, all ripening under the summer sun. It is the Germans who sowed this grain; but they are gone, and it is we who shall harvest it.

Except for these crops, which they had meant for themselves and which they had not the time to destroy, they have, as a matter of course, sacked everything, even where they had no military excuse. There is no village, no church, no cluster of buildings that they have not sedulously and hatefully destroyed.

Ah, but we are over and done with the evil faces of the Huns in their green slacks! For now I am near the trenches, and their precious lives may not be hazarded here, within range of the shells of their compatriots. Here we have our own good Territorials, with their kindly, honest faces, bending

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under the hot sunlight and labouring courageously to restore the roads that are needed for our columns of men and transport.

And, as I go onwards, the devastations grow worse around me ; and I hear, in a great crescendo, like a storm coming nearer, the cavernous sound of the heavy artillery, which, since it never ceases by day or by night, assumes at last the aspect of a special form of silence.

For miles my car had been running in the shade ; but, in the zone that we are entering, the century old trees which used to border the roads so bravely have been sawn through by the Huns a yard above the ground. And the canals and rivers that we pass are veritable graveyards of boats—innumerable craft which used once to ensure communications between town and town have been destroyed with dynamite. Some have sunk to the bottom, and show only their sterns ; others, on the contrary, have sunk stern forwards, and show their bows as if, in dying, they had reared up. We cross these waterways upon pontoons and bridges hastily improvised by the engineers, for the Huns have blown up all the bridges, and their piles have been thrown down as if by a cataclysm.

Here, as the car passes on, strange forms in profile erect themselves against the horizon. From afar they suggest carcasses of mastodons and ichthyosaurs heaped pell-mell together : they are piston rods, wheels, boilers, protruding in all directions



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from heaps of masonry. And then you recognise them as the remains of sugar refineries—our rich refineries of the Northern Departments. Amongst these the work of destruction has been particularly attended to: brick walls lie prostrate and crumbled to dust. But the machinery, the boilers, and the cylinders could not be pulverised, so the Huns have had to be content with rendering them useless; and there they lie, chaotically, suggesting the *macabre* and suggesting the grotesque.

A solitary church passes us by; nothing of it remains standing but the east wall and the altar. Beside a Virgin who has lost a head stands a gilt vase still containing its branch of artificial lilies.

A storm—a storm created by Nature, not by man—is beginning to murmur in the distant skies, and tragic clouds mass together. We are travelling fast; and we reach the town where I have business. Astonishing assemblies of old iron, the first clearings up of our soldiers, rise up at the entry into this town; and there is something of everything in these hills of debris. You will see stoves, kitchen gear, pieces of cast-iron fallen from penthouses, and innumerable iron beds tortuously crushed together. Amongst them there are many children's beds. . . . Where are the children who slept in them?

The workmen of the "gracious Emperor" have reached the ideal of destruction in this town. It is no exaggeration—it is the literal truth—that not one monument, not one house, remains that has not been razed to within a yard of the earth; the

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whole town is just one immense and formless tumulus, above which the fruit-trees and the arbutuses, with their trunks sawn through, hang over and dry away.

An officer who spoke to me told me a little detail . . . negligible, but touching enough. . . . He tells me how the swallows come back. You know their fidelity to their chosen dwellings. When, this spring, they came back—to find nothing—they seemed to go mad; great flights of them wheeled round and round for hours, uttering their particular screaming alarm-cry—and then, as if in a panic, they swept away.

Amongst the streets, covered in with rubbish, our fatigue parties are at work, making openings along which our troops and transport wagons may pass. There are no recognisable shapes of houses—nowhere! Nevertheless, upon the pile of stones which was once the church, the Huns—so that no man may forget it—have had the *Delikatesse* to plant the iron cross that once surmounted the steeple.

Words are powerless to record the horror of it all—a horror that lacks probability and that has the madness of nightmare. Words are powerless to reflect the furious indignation, the rage, and the desire for vengeance that you will feel. . . . Of deliberate purpose, without any provocation, this degraded Prussian people has come out against us and has done this to our houses. And the ruins themselves are as nothing. What is most irreparable in their work is all the new graveyards dug in the

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land and all the overflowing trenches of the dead. Ah, very degraded and outside the pale is that human race which, at a sign from its master, came out against us with its all too skilled machine-gun fire, its ignoble incendiary liquids, and its death-dealing gas, to make hecatombs of our sons and brothers, and of all the fair youth of France! Well, if we leave them the power of recovery now they will begin again; they will behave worse still, for they have murder in their souls as other peoples have the instinct of honour. And to think that there are men, styling themselves Frenchmen, who would wish us to stretch out friendly hands to these Huns, and that, at the end, we should let them keep what they have taken and depart without punishment for so many outrages and so many crimes! To think that, in Paris, there are papers that have dared to print such words as: "It is regrettable, assuredly; but war is war. War is always like that, and every one does the same."

Oh, monstrous blasphemy! Has anyone ever seen our armies, in spite of the excesses that always go along with war, commit atrocities like these? To judge of the profound differences between the races it would have been enough to go, fifteen years ago, to Peking, when all Europe was seeking—lamentably enough, I agree—to act as "torch-bearers of civilisation"! We, as conquerors, shared out the Celestial City and the surrounding provinces, giving them, sector by sector, to the allied nations. And peace reigned in the French sector, and the Chinese

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continued tranquilly their daily lives ; our soldiers even helped them in the fields and succoured their lost orphans. But in the German sector day by day, after the fighting was over, it was destruction, pillage, burnings, and murder. And, for the rest, the brutality of Germany had been the prime cause of it all : for *he*, always he, the prime mover in the world-wide butchery of to-day, their gracious Emperor, had said officially to his soldiers : "Act like the Huns ; it is my will that, in fifty years, your passing through may be remembered with terror."

Above, in the stormy skies, there loom three of those ugly blackish things that are called sausages ; but they resemble rather huge inflated fish, as it were, aerial whales. Well, we know that they bear Huns with telescopes and with the aid of wireless telegraphy, who spy upon us unceasingly, and upon every military movement which hazards itself to the light of day, and upon any gathering of troops.

Nevertheless, our soldiers in blue are very numerous in the town, which is an important base ; they come here to "rest," to recover a little from the hardships of the trenches, which are so near. By the grace of God, they go and come and perform their innumerable duties under the protection of a few devices of "*camouflage*"—painted tents and simulated trees—which scarcely conceal them. They are much less happy—poor men—than those who

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are billeted in towns not quite completely destroyed where some remains of houses are to be found, and some few townspeople have been heroic enough to remain, in spite of the showers of shells. In those towns they would at least see women's faces and the faces of little children to comfort the hearts of those who have children of their own.

Here there is nothing to see ; they look into each other's faces and into the dark cellars into which they must too often go to shelter themselves from death. . . .

Come and visit them, and consider their sublime tranquillity, all you elegant and futile Parisians who complain of the war dragging itself out. Oh, I know very well that you are patriots ; but if there is any danger of your ardour becoming fatigued or dissipated, come here and be once more endued with zeal. Or, at least, when these soldiers come to your Paris on leave, try not to make them feel revolted at the sight of your gaieties and comforts. The country is in danger, and death stalks at your gates. . . . If the Germans have perpetrated one of their heavy stupidities in sending air raids over London to assassinate little children, they have been more skilful in sending to Paris only agents of corruption and orators of sedition. . . .

And you, Neutrals, who do not blush to suffer the committing of such abominations—and assuredly, later, they will fall upon your heads, too!—come here and walk amidst our ruins. You do not



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picture them as being horrible enough, so I am willing to believe ; that is your best excuse. . . .

To the Americans I need no longer address myself, for they are magnificently on the road. They are coming with treasure, with soldiers, with munitions of war, to the rescue of civilisation and of liberty. They are more admirable than the last of the European Neutrals who shall fall in line with us. The Americans were only distantly threatened ; the ocean would have shielded them—at least, for a time—from the tentacles of the German land-octopus. If they have arisen in their might, it is on the crest of a wave of superb indignation, purely from a sentiment of solidarity and of justice. When I was last in their country my Oriental soul was afraid of their modernity, of their fever of speculation and of progress : I was scarcely able to see that they were capable of such idealism and of such disinterestedness. May they pardon me and permit me the joy of being here the humble interpreter of our profound and sympathetic admiration.



# THE TRAIL OF THE BARBARIANS

"Act like the Huns; it is my will that,  
in fifty years, your passing through  
may be remembered with terror."

*The Kaiser*



BLOSSOMING FOR THE LAST TIME.



THE RUIN IN THE ORCHARDS.

"**G**REAT pear trees and apple trees a  
hundred years old, the chief riches  
of the peasants, were aligned along the  
borders of the roads or in the orchards;  
and the Germans (not neglecting to  
destroy the smallest hamlet) found time  
to saw them all through a yard above  
the earth."

*Pierre Loti.*

# "CHILDREN . . . will be FLOGGED"

Holnon, le 24 juillet 1915.

Tous les ouvriers et les femmes et les enfants de  
15 ans sont obligés de faire travaux des champs  
de 6 heures, aussi dimanche de quatre heures  
de matin jusqu'à 8 heures de soir. Les femmes  
doivent faire une demi-heure au matin et une  
à midi et une demi-heure après midi.  
La corvée sera faite à la manière suivante.  
1. Les faibles ouvriers seront combinés pendant  
la récolte en compagnies des ouvriers dans une  
certaine zone ou section des propriétés allemandes  
près de la zone. Les faibles seront emprison-  
nés trois jours; le quatrième jour ils nourriront  
seulement du pain et de l'eau.  
Les femmes faibles seront envoyées à Holnon  
pour travailler.  
Après la récolte les femmes sont à emprisonner  
trois jours.  
Les enfants faibles seront envoyés à la zone de  
Holnon.  
Le reste de la communauté réserve de faire les  
faibles ouvriers et les autres sections de tous  
les jours.  
Les ouvriers et la communauté faibles sont envoyés  
à Holnon.



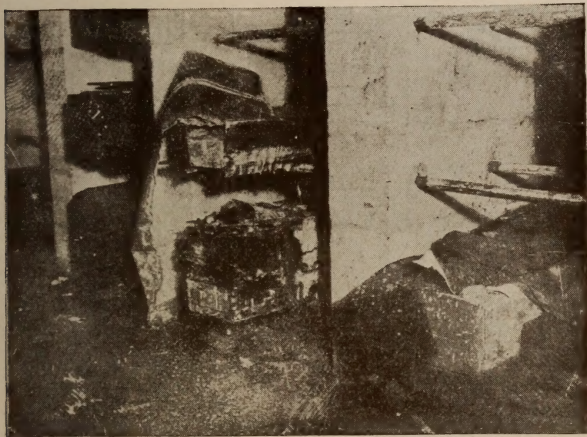
Glopp

et commandant

THE FAMOUS GERMAN PROCLAMATION  
OF HOLNON.

(For translation see opposite page.)

# DESECRATION *of* *the* GRAVES



DESECRATED COFFINS.

“ONE asks oneself with amazement how it is possible for the army of a nation calling itself civilised to commit such deeds; but more astounding still is the discovery that its soldiers have even desecrated tombs.”

(*Journal Officiel*, p. 3059, col. ii.)

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Holnon, July 20, 1915.

All workmen, and woman and children of 15 years and upwards, must work in the fields daily, Sundays included, from 4 a.m. till 8 p.m. (French time). A break is allowed of half an hour in the morning, one hour at midday, and half an hour in the afternoon.

Any breach of these regulations will be punished as follows:—

(1) Men refusing to work will *during* the harvest be formed into labour companies and detained in barracks under the supervision of German corporals.

*After* the harvest those refusing to work will be sent to prison for six months; on the third day the rations will be simply bread and water.

(2) Women unwilling to work will be exiled to Holnon to labour.

*After* the harvest these women will be imprisoned for six months.

(3) Children refusing to work will be flogged.

The Commandant will, further, at his discretion order the punishment of refractory workmen with a flogging of 20 strokes daily.

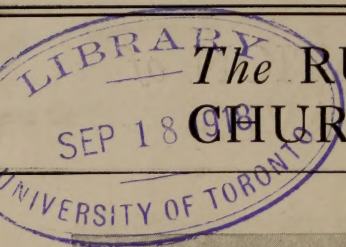
The workmen of the parish of Veudelles are now undergoing severe punishment.

[Signature of the Commandant.]

*To be posted in Public.*

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# *The* RUIN of CHURCHES

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ONE AMONG THE THOUSAND RUINED CHURCHES OF FRANCE



THE TOMB OF MILHEM DEVAUX.

“THEY knew exactly how much explosive was needed for the carrying out of their infamous work. Nothing now remains of the Church of St. Martin but a few bare walls.”

(*Journal Officiel*, p. 3059, col. iii.)

Author

J. O. L. P.

Rept  
H. H. L.

Title

The Trail of the Badlanders

DATE.

Apr 20/22

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